

BUDDHA AND BUDDHISM

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From the Journal of the R. Asiatic Society, Vol. XVI (1856), p. 229-65.

[Read as a Lecture, April 8, 1854.]

MUCH has been written, much has been said in various places, and amongst them in this Society, about Buddha, and the religious system which bears his name, yet it may be suspected that the notions which have been entertained and propagated, in many particulars relating to both the history and the doctrines, have been adopted upon insufficient information and somewhat prematurely disseminated. Very copious additions, and those of a highly authentic character, have been, but very recently, made to the stock of materials which we heretofore possessed, and there has scarcely yet been sufficient time for their deliberate examination. Copious also and authentic as they are, they are still incomplete, and much remains for Oriental scholars to accomplish before it can be said that the materials for such a history of Buddha as shall command the assent of all who study the subject, have been conclusively provided. I have,

therefore, no purpose of proposing to you in the views I am about to take, that you should consider them as final; my only intention is to bring the subject before you as it stands at present, with some of that additional elucidation which is derivable from the many valuable publications that have recently appeared, and particularly from the learned and authentic investigations of the late Eugène Burnouf, the only scholar as yet who has combined a knowledge of Sanskrit with that of Páli and Tibetan, and has been equally familiar with the Buddhist authorities of the north and south of India: unfortunately he has been lost to us before he had gone through the wide circuit of research which he had contemplated, and which he only was competent to have traversed; and although he has accomplished more than any other scholar, more than it would seem possible for any human ability and industry to have achieved, it is to be deeply and for ever regretted that his life was not spared to have effected all he had intended, and for which he was collecting, and had collected, many valuable and abundant materials. Still he has left us, in his "Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme"; and in his posthumous work "Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi", an immense mass of authentic information which was not formerly within our reach, and which must contribute effectually to rationalize the speculations that may be hazarded in future on Buddha and his faith. Some of those which have been started by the erudition and ingenuity of the learned in past ages will

best introduce us to the opportunity we now have of ascertaining what is probable, if we cannot positively affirm that it is all true.

It is sometimes supposed that the classical authors supply us with evidence of the Buddhist religion in India three centuries before the era of Christianity, drawing this inference especially from the fragments which remain of the writings of Megasthenes, the ambassador of Seleucus to Chandragupta, about the year B.C. 295, according to his latest editor, Schwanbeck*, and to whose descriptions of various particulars respecting India the other ancient writers are almost wholly indebted. It is well known that he divides the Indian philosophers into two classes, the Brachmanai and the Sarmanai; and the latter it has been concluded intend the Śramaṇas, one of the titles of the Buddhist ascetics. This is not impossible. If we trust to the traditions of the Buddhists, their founder lived at least two centuries before the mission of Megasthenes, and in that case we might expect to meet with his disciples in the descriptions of the ambassador. At the same time Śramaṇa is not exclusively the designation of a Buddhist, it is equally that of a Brahmanical ascetic; and its use does not positively determine to which class it is to be applied¹. In truth, it is clear

[Megasth. Indica, p. 20. Lassen, Ind. Alt., II, 209. 663.]

¹ When Arjuna goes to the forest he is attended amongst others by Śramaṇā Vanaukasāḥ, forest-dwelling Śramaṇas: these could not have been Buddhists,—*Mahābhārat*, Adi Parva, v. 7742.

from what follows that the Brahman was intended, for Megasthenes^o proceeds to say: "of the Sarmanai, the most highly venerated among them are the Hylobii," that is, as he goes on to explain the term, "those who pass their lives in the woods (*ζῶντας ἐν ταῖς ὕλαις*), and who live upon wild fruits and seeds, and are clothed in the barks of trees," in other words the Vánaprastha of the Brahmanical system; literally, the dweller in the woods, the man of the third order, who, having fulfilled his course of householder, is enjoined by Manu to repair to the lonely wood to subsist upon green roots and fruit, and to wear a vesture of bark. Major Cunningham*, indeed, who is a courageous etymologist, derives Hylobii from the Sanskrit *Alobhiya*, "one who is without desire", that is, the Bodhisattwa, who has suppressed all human passions; but *Alobhiya* is not a genuine Sanskrit word, nor is there any authority for its application to a *Bodhisattwa*, and Megasthenes may be presumed to have understood his own language. His interpretation of Hylobii, the dwellers in the woods, is in such perfect conformity with the meaning of Vánaprastha, that we cannot doubt the identity of the two designations.

Nothing of any value, upon this subject at least, is derivable from classical writers in addition to the information furnished by Megasthenes; but when we come later down, or to the early ages of Christianity, various curious notices of Buddhism occur in the

* [The Bhilsa Topes, 1854, p. 64. See Lassen, II, 700 ff.]

writings of the Fathers of the Church, which though meagre are in the main correct. We need not be surprised at this: there is no doubt that Buddhism was in a highly flourishing state in India in the first centuries of Christianity, and it is not extraordinary that some indications of its diffusion should have found their way to Syria and Egypt.

Clemens of Alexandria, who lived towards the close of the second century, had evidently heard of the monastic practices, and of the peculiar monuments or Topes of the Buddhists. When he speaks of the Brachmanai and the Sarmanai as two distinct classes of Indian philosophers, he uses the very words of Megasthenes, and merely, therefore, repeats his statement; but that he does not understand Buddhists by Sarmanes is clear enough, for he proceeds to add, "there are of the Indians some who worship Buddha, or Boutta, whom they honour as a god"; and in another passage he observes: "those of the Indians who are called Semnoi cultivate truth, foretell events, and reverence certain pyramids in which they imagine the bones of some divinity are deposited, they observe perpetual continence; there are also maidens termed Semnai." Semnoi and Semnai might be thought to have some relation to Śramaṇas, but the words, perhaps, bear only their original purport, "venerable or sacred".

About the middle of the following century, Porphyry repeats information gathered from Bardesanes, who obtained it from the Indian envoys sent to Anto-

ninus; and although the account is somewhat confused, there is an evident allusion to Buddhist practices. "There are," he says, "two divisions of the Gymnosophists, Brachmans, and Samanai,"—not Sarmanai, but Samanai,—“the former are so by birth, the latter by election, consisting of all those who give themselves up to the cultivation of sacred learning: they live in colleges, in dwellings, and temples constructed by the princes, abandoning their families and property: they are summoned to prayer by the ringing of a bell, and live upon rice and fruits.” Cyril of Alexandria also mentions that the Samanæans were the philosophers of the Bactrians, showing the extension of Buddhism beyond the confines of India; and St. Jerome, who, like Cyril, lived at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, was evidently acquainted with Buddhistical legends, for he says that Buddha was believed to have been born of a virgin, and to have come forth from his mother's side. From Cyril of Jerusalem and Ephraim, writers of the middle of the fourth century, we learn that Buddhism tainted some of the heresies of the early Christian Church, especially the Manichæan, which the latter terms the Indian heresy: the former states that Terebinthus, the preceptor of Manes, the Persian Mani, took the name of Baudas. Hyde and Beausobre explain this to mean no more than that the word Terebinthus in Greek was the same as Butam in Chaldaic, a kind of tree; but the word in Cyril is Baudas, not Butem, and it is more likely that Terebinthus

styled himself a Bauddha, or a Buddha, especially as an Indian origin was assigned to the doctrines he introduced. Epiphanius, indeed, explains how this happened by going a step further. According to him Scythianus, *quasi* Śákya, the master and instructor of Terebinthus, was an Arabian or Egyptian merchant, who had grown rich by trading with India, whence he imported not only valuable merchandise, but heretical doctrines and books. Suidas calls Manes himself a Brahman, a pupil of Bauddha, formerly called Terebinthus, who, coming into Persia, falsely pretended that he was born of a virgin. These accounts are no doubt scanty and in some respects inaccurate, but they demonstrate clearly that the Buddhism of India was not wholly unknown to the Christian writers between the second and fifth centuries of our era.

Without at present referring more particularly to the information furnished us by Chinese travellers in India between the third and sixth centuries, we may next advert to the strange theories which were gravely advanced, by men of the highest repute in Europe for erudition and sagacity, from the middle to the end of the last century, respecting the origin and character of Buddha. Deeply interested by the accounts which were transmitted to Europe by the missionaries of the Romish Church, who penetrated to Tibet, Japan, and China, as well as by other travellers to those countries, the members of the French Academy especially set to work to establish coincidences the most improbable, and identified Buddha with a variety of

personages, imaginary or real, with whom no possible congruity existed; thus it was attempted to show that Buddha was the same as the Toth or Hermes of the Egyptians,—the Turm of the Etruscans; that he was Mercury, Zoroaster, Pythagoras; the Woden or Odin of the Scandinavians:—Manes, the author of the Manichæan heresy; and even the divine author of Christianity. These were the dreams of no ordinary men; and, besides Giorgi and Paolino, we find amongst the speculators the names of Huet, Vossius, Fourmont, Leibnitz, and De Guignes.

The influence and example of great names pervaded the inquiry, even after access to more authentic information had been obtained, and shews itself in some of the early volumes of the researches of our venerable parent the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Thus Chambers is divided between Mercury and Woden. Buchanan looks out for an Egyptian or Abyssinian prototype, and even Sir William Jones fluctuates between Woden and Sisac. In the first instance he observes: “nor can we doubt that Wod or Odin was the same with Budh;” but in a subsequent paper he remarks: “we may safely conclude that Sacya or Sisak, about 200 years after Vyasa, either in person, or by a colony from Egypt, imported into this country [India] the mild heresy of the ancient Bauddhas.” This spirit of impossible analogies is, even yet, not wholly extinct; and writers are found to identify Buddha with the prophet Daniel, and to ascribe the appearance of Buddhism in India, to the captivity and dispersion of

the Jews. When, however, a more profound acquaintance with the literature of the principal Buddhist nations began to shed genuine light upon the subject, it soon scattered the shadows which the darkness of ignorance had begotten. The language of the Chinese and of the Mongols were assiduously studied in the early part of the present century, especially by Klaproth, Remusat, and Schmidt; and the application of their acquirements to the illustration of Buddhism was evinced in numerous interesting and authentic contributions to the early volumes of the *Journal Asiatique*, and the transactions of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, and more particularly in the copious annotations which accompany the French translation, by Remusat, Klaproth, and Landresse, of the travels of the Chinese priest, Fa Hian, in the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries. Valuable as this work undoubtedly is as a Buddhist picture of the condition of India at that period, it would have been in many respects almost unintelligible without the amplification of its brief notices into the extensive views of the system and its authors, which are to be found in the notes attached to the text; the details contained in which are mainly derived from the Buddhist literature of China, with some accessions from that of the Mongols.

In the mean time, however, the interest, which had languished in India, subsequently to the first vain conceits of the Bengal Asiatic Society, revived; and a whole flood of contributions of a character equally

novel and important was poured upon the public, both from the north and from the south. The former took the lead, and Buddhism as still prevalent in Nepal and the adjacent Himalayan regions was zealously investigated by Mr. Hodgson, the results of whose inquiries were communicated to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and subsequently to the Royal Asiatic Society. Besides the information which he himself collected, he contributed still more importantly to the progress of the investigation by first bringing to our knowledge the existence of a number of Buddhist writings in Sanskrit, as well as that of a most voluminous body of works, chiefly if not exclusively Buddhist, in the language of Tibet. He did more; he procured the books, and in the exercise of a sound judgment, as well as generous liberality, sent them where they were likely to be turned to good account, to the several Asiatic Societies of Calcutta, London, and Paris. To the former, between 1824 and 1830, he presented nearly 50 volumes in Sanskrit, and 200 in Tibetan: to this Society he presented above 100 volumes in Sanskrit and Tibetan, and at various dates he forwarded to the Société Asiatique 88 volumes of Sanskrit, besides the whole of the great Tibetan collections, the Kah-gyur and Stan-gyur, in more than 300 volumes. He finally presented to the East India Company a copy of the two Tibetan collections, which are now at the India House. Mr. Hodgson sent these books to Europe, not, as M. Burnouf observes, that they might slumber in undisturbed repose upon the shelves

of a library, but that they might be made to yield the information they might contain. That these expectations have not been wholly disappointed is due, I am sorry to say, to no zeal or acquirement native to the soil; and the books in the Society's possession have done little more than repose in dust and oblivion upon the shelves where they were originally deposited.

The accumulations of Mr. Hodgson have, however, not been made in vain. The Tibetan volumes especially were fortunate in finding an expounder in Alexander Csoma Körösi, whose ardent aspirations after knowledge led him, penniless and friendless, from Transylvania to Ladakh, where, with the aid of our equally adventurous countryman Moorcroft, he was enabled to study and to master the language of Tibet. Placed subsequently in communication with the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, he devoted much of his time to the examination of the volumes of the Kah-gyur, and has given the results of his labour to the public in the Journals of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and in the 20th Vol. of the Researches; he has also afforded, by a grammar and dictionary of Tibetan, the means of prosecuting the cultivation of the language in Europe; and the Transactions of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, as well as other publications, evince the scholarship of Mr. Schmidt in Tibetan as well as in the literature of the Mongols. We have also a very valuable contribution to the History of Buddhism in a life of Buddha, translated originally from Sanskrit into Tibetan, and from that language into French, and

published two or three years since by M. Foucaux M. Burnouf also qualified himself to make use of the Tibetan books supplied by Mr. Hodgson, but found abundant occupation for his time in translating from the Sanskrit originals. His Introduction to the History of Buddhism contains copious translations from many of the principal Buddhist works, whilst the work published after his death, the "*Lotus de la bonne Loi*", is a translation of a Sanskrit Buddhist work which has been known to be highly estimated for centuries wherever Buddhism is professed.

At the same time that Hodgson and Csoma were illustrating the literature of Buddhism, as it existed in the north of India, a like spirit of research animated the regions of the south, and the Páli scholars of Ceylon began to draw from the stores within their reach new and valuable sources of information. Besides various contributions to the Ceylon periodicals, and to the Journal of the Bengal Society**, the late Mr. Turnour has in his edition and translation of the *Maháwanso* furnished us with an authentic record of the notions which are current not only amongst the

* [Soon after the appearance of Foucaux's translation and edition of the "*Rgya tch'er rol pa*", A. Schiefner gave from the Tibetan a full analysis, with copious notes, of a more modern life of Buddha. See his article "*Eine tibetische Lebensbeschreibung Śākyamuni's*" in Vol. VI of the St. Petersburg. "*Mémoires des Savants Étrangers*".]

** [Ceylon Almanacs for 1833 and 1834. Journ. As. Soc. Beng., Vols. V-VII.]

people of Ceylon, but those of Ava and Siam, who belong to the same school, and whose authorities are identical. The course commenced by Mr. Turnour has been followed up with great ability by the Rev. Mr. Gogerly* in the *Friend of Ceylon*, and the proceedings of the branch Asiatic Society instituted on the island, whilst Mr. Hardy in his *Eastern Monachism*, and *Manual of Buddhism*, has brought together all that is at present known of the Buddhism of the South.

We are not, therefore, in want now of genuine means of forming correct opinions of the outline of Buddhism, as to its doctrines and practices, but there are still questions of vital importance to its history for the solution of which our materials are defective. Disregarding all the fancies of speculation which are based upon imperfect knowledge, and receiving with caution the accounts given us by the Chinese missionaries, the most rational course to be adopted in seeking for information on which dependence may be placed, is, to consult the works which the Buddhists themselves regard as their scriptures, and from which their own history and doctrines are derived: but then, who will answer for the authorities? what is the history, what is the date, of the numerous works that are available, and which consist of two great divisions, the Sanskrit and the Páli? and what is the comparative value of the respective classes? Are they to be

* [*Ceylon Friend*, Vols. I-IV, Journ. Ceylon Br. R. A. Soc. I, No. 1-4. II, 1. 3. IV, 1.]

regarded as synchronous and independent? and if not, which is the senior, which is the original? These are questions which M. Burnouf himself declares cannot yet be answered with confidence: an exact comparison between the two series of works, he declares to be impossible in the present state of our knowledge. We are not yet in possession of all the works that may exist in either class, but even if they were all collected in any European library, they must be read and studied, translated and commented upon, and the translations and comments must be published. This task, more tedious than difficult, would require the cooperation of many laborious and patient scholars, and upon its completion in a satisfactory manner could critical investigation alone commence.

Although, however, it is perfectly true that conclusions on which implicit reliance is to be placed must be preceded by such a series of operations as M. Burnouf indicates, yet, as that preliminary process is indefinitely deferred and may never be perfected, we must be content in the meanwhile to make use of such means as we possess, and from them to form a conjectural approximation, if not a positive propinquity, to the solution of the question upon which the whole depends—the antiquity and authenticity of the writings in which the Buddhists themselves record the history of their founder and the doctrines which they maintain, and from which alone we can derive information that is of any real value. The great body of the Buddhist writings consists avowedly of transla-

tions; the Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, Cingalese, Burman, and Siamese books, are all declaredly translations of works written in the language of India—that which is commonly called *Fān*, or more correctly *Fan-lan-mo*, or “the language of the Brahmans”; and then comes the question, to what language does that term apply? does it mean Sanskrit or does it mean Pāli? involving also the question of the priority and originality of the works written in those languages respectively; the Sanskrit works as they have come into our hands being found almost exclusively in Nepal, those in Pāli being obtained chiefly from Ceylon and Ava.

Until very lately, the language designated by the Chinese *Fan* was enveloped in some uncertainty. Fa Hsān in the fourth century takes with him *Fan* books not only from India but from Ceylon, and the latter it has been concluded were Pāli. No Sanskrit Buddhist works, as far as we yet know, have been met with in the south any more than Pāli works in the north, although Sanskrit works are not unfrequent in Ceylon in the present day. The mystery, however, is now cleared up. In the life and travels of Hiuan Tsang, written by two of his scholars and translated from the Chinese by M. Julien, the matter is placed beyond all dispute by the description and by the examples which the Chinese traveller gives of the construction of the *Fan* language, in which he was himself a proficient, having been engaged many years in the study whilst in India, and in translating from

it after his return to China. We learn then from him, that the words of the *Fan* language are distinguished under two classes, *Ting-anta* and *Sup-anta*, the Sanskrit grammatical designations of *verbs* and *nouns*; that the former have eighteen modifications or persons, in two divisions, nine in each, one called *Panto-sa-mi*, or, in Sanskrit, *Parasmai*; the other *O-ta-mo-ni*, or, in Sanskrit, *Atmane*. All verbs and nouns have three numbers, singular, dual, and plural, of which he gives us examples both in conjugation and declension. All this is Sanskrit; and what is more to the point, it is not Mágadhi, the proper designation of the dialect termed in the south Páli. No form of Prákrit, Páli included, *has a dual number*, and the terminations of the cases of the noun are, in several respects, entirely distinct¹. Hiuan Tsang also cor-

¹ The following examples are given by Hiuan Tsang of the inflexions of a verb and noun [Hist. de la vie de Hiouen Tshang, 168-71]:

VERB.

CHINESE.	SANSKRIT.	ENGLISH.
<i>Third Person.</i>		
<i>Sing.</i> P'o-po-ti	Bhavati	He is
<i>Du.</i> P'o-po-pa	Bhavapa (for Bhavatah')	They two are
<i>Pl.</i> P'o-fan-ti	Bhavanti	They are
<i>Second Person.</i>		
<i>Sing.</i> P'o-po-sse	Bhavasi	Thou art
<i>Du.</i> P'o-po-po	Bhavapa (for Bhavathah')	You two are
<i>Pl.</i> P'o-po-t'a	Bhavatha	You are
<i>First Person.</i>		
<i>Sing.</i> P'o-po-mi	Bhavámi	I am
<i>Du.</i> P'o-po-hoa	Bhavávaḥ	We two are
<i>Pl.</i> P'o-po-mo	Bhavámah'	We are
<i>V.</i> P'o-po-mo-sse		

rectly adds that the grammar in use in India, in his time, was the work of a Brahman of the north, a native of Tula or Śalātura, named Po-ni-ni, or Pāṇini, the well known Sanskrit grammarian; and he notices

		NOUN.	
CHINESE.		SANSKRIT.	ENGLISH
<i>Nominative.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-sha		Purushaḥ	Man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-shao		Purushau	Two men
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-sha-so		Purushás	Men
<i>Accusative.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-shan		Purusham	Man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-shao		Purushau	Two men
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-shoang		Purushán	Men
<i>Instrumental.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-shai-na		Purushēna	By a man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-sha-pien		Purushábhyaṁ	By two men
<i>Pl.</i> { Pu-lu-sha-pi Pu-lu-sha-sse		{ Purushábbhiḥ Purushais }	By men
<i>Dative.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-hia-ye		Purusháya	To man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-sha-pien		Purushábhyaṁ	To two men.
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-shai-sho		Purusheshu (for Puru- [shebhyah])	To men
<i>Ablative.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-sha-to		Purushát	From a man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-sha-pien		Purushábhyaṁ	From two men
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-she-sho		Purusheshu (for Puru- [shebhyah])	From men
<i>Genitive.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-sha-tsie		Purushasya	Of a man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-sha-pien		Purushábhyaṁ (for Puru-	Of two men
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-sha-nan		Purushánám [shayoh]	Of men
<i>Locative.</i>			
<i>Sing.</i> Pu-lu-ch'ai		Purushe	In a man
<i>Du.</i> Pu-lu-sha-yu		Purushayoh	In two men
<i>Pl.</i> Pu-lu-shai-tseu		Purusheshu	In men

a form of the verb peculiar to the Grammar of the Vêdas (Fei-to).

The evidence of Hiuan Tsang, therefore, is conclusive as to the language of the books which were sought for and studied by the Chinese Buddhists in India, and carried with them to China, and there translated into the form and under the appellation in which they still exist. Whether the books they took from Ceylon were Sanskrit or Páli, we have no further indication than the name *Fan*, which it seems most probable that Fa Hian employed in the same sense as Hiuan Tsang, or that of Sanskrit; and it is also to be observed that the principal works of Ceylon are subsequent to his time, which makes it further almost certain that the *Fan* books of Ceylon were also in Sanskrit.

The Buddhist authorities of India Proper, then, were undeniably Sanskrit; those of Ceylon might have been Páli or Mágadhi: were they synchronous with the Sanskrit books, or were they older, or were they younger, more ancient or more modern? To answer these questions we must endeavour to determine their

CHINESE.	SANSKRIT.	ENGLISH.
<i>Vocative.</i>		
<i>Sing.</i> Hi (He) Pu-lu-sha	Purusha	O man
<i>Du.</i> Hi (He) Pu-lu-shao	Purushau	O two men
<i>Pl.</i> Hi (He) Pu-lu-sha	Purusháh	O men

The verb does not differ materially from the Páli verb; but the inflexional terminations of the cases of the noun differ very widely: some of them are misstated, but this is probably from errors of transcription.

relative chronology, from the imperfect means which are within our reach. Both sets of authorities undoubtedly, Sanskrit and Páli, were in existence in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. The Sanskrit works, according to the testimony of Chinese travellers, were carried from India to China in very considerable numbers from a much earlier date; in one instance it is said two years before Christ, but it was not till after A.D. 76, the date of the introduction of Buddhism into China, that they were imported in any number, and not till the third and fourth centuries that they had become very numerous. In a Chinese history of celebrated Buddhist teachers, published between 502 and 556, and from which M. Julien has given us extracts a Buddhist priest named Dharma, is said to have brought to China one hundred and sixty-five works, amongst which were several that may be readily identified with the Sanskrit works procured by Mr. Hodgson: we cannot hesitate, for example, to recognise in the Ching-fa-hua, meaning "The Flower of the right Law", the Sad Dharma Puṇḍarīka, "Le Lotus de la bonne Loi", which, as has been mentioned, was the last labour of M. Burnouf. Of this work repeated translations have been made into Chinese*, the first of which dates A.D. 280, whilst of the Lalita Vistara, or life of Śākya Muni, the earliest Chinese version was made between A.D. 70-76. We may be satisfied, therefore, that the

* [W. Wasth, *der Buddhismus*. 1860, I, 163. Burnouf, *introduction*, I, 8 f.]

principal Sanskrit authorities which we still possess were composed by the beginning of the Christian era at least; how much earlier is less easily determined.

According to the Buddhists themselves, the doctrines of Śākya Muni were not committed to writing by him, but were orally communicated to his disciples, and transmitted in like manner by them to succeeding generations. When they were first written is not clearly made out from the traditions of the north; but they agree with those of the south in describing the occurrence of different public councils or convocations at which the senior Buddhist priests corrected the errors that had crept into the teaching of heterodox disciples and agreed upon the chief points of discipline and doctrine that were to be promulgated. The first of these councils was held, it is said, immediately after Śākya Muni's death; the second 110, and the third 218 years afterwards, or about 246 B.C. The northern Buddhists confound apparently the second and third councils, or take no notice of the latter in the time of Aśoka, but place the third in Kashmir under the patronage of Kanishka or Kanerka, one of the Hindo-Scythic kings, 400 years after Buddha's Nirvāṇa, or B.C. 153. Both accounts agree that the propagation of Buddhism, by missions dispatched for that purpose, took place after the third council.

According to the traditions which are current in the south as well as the north, the classification of the Buddhist authorities as the Tripitaka (the three collections) took place at the first council; the portion

termed Sūtra, the doctrinal precepts, being compiled by Ānanda; the Vinaya, or discipline of the priesthood, by Upāli; and the Abhidharma, or philosophical portion, by Kāśyapa—all three Buddha's disciples. Their compilations were revised at the second council, and were finally established as canonical at the last. Their being compiled, however, does not necessarily imply their being written; and, according to the northern Buddhists, they were not committed to writing until after the convocation in Kashmir, or 153 B. C.; whilst the southern authorities state, that they were preserved by memory for 450 years, and were then first reduced to writing in Ceylon.

It is to the former of these periods that M. Burnouf would ascribe the composition of the principal Sanskrit works which are still extant. That they continued to be written for four or five centuries afterwards is obvious from internal evidence, and even from their number and extent. In the sixth century Hiuan Tsang and his assistants translated 740 works, forming 1,335 volumes. Of these he himself took to China 657, and they had been brought thither in great numbers before his time. There is also a considerable body of works of a still more recent date, forming the basis upon which many adulterations have crept into Buddhism, evidently borrowed from the Tantras of the Brahmans: 700 works, however, all undoubtedly prior to the sixth century, must have been the work of many years, and have furnished full occupation to the Buddhist scholars of several centuries preceding.

We may consider it then established upon the most probable evidence, that the chief Sanskrit authorities of the Buddhists still in our possession were written, at the latest, from a century and a half before, to as much after, the era of Christianity.

Now what is the case with the Páli authorities of the South? We have it most explicitly stated in the great Singhalese authority, the Maháwanso*, that the doctrines of Buddha were handed down orally, for more than four centuries after his death; and that they were not reduced to writing till the reign of Wattagámini, between B.C. 104 and 76. And that then the Pitákam was first written in Páli, and the commentary upon it (the Atthakathá) in Singhalese. The latter did not exist in *Páli* until the *fifth century* of the Christian era, or between A.D. 410, 432, when Buddhaghosa, originally a Brahman of Magadha, arrived in Ceylon, and gave the first impulse to the cultivation of his own dialect, the Mágadhí, to which the people of the south have applied the term Páli; meaning, according to M. Turnour, "perfect, regular".

* [c. XXXIII, 106 ff. with which the following verses of the Dípawansa, c. 20, almost literally agree:

Wattagámani abhayo panchamásésu ádito
 Evañ dvádasa vassáni rájá rajjam akárayi ||
 Pitákattayapálincha tassá atthakatháni cha
 Mukhapáthena ánesum pubbe bhikkhú mahámata ||
 Hániñ disvána sattánañ tadá bhikkhú samágatá
 Thiratthitattañ dhammassa potthakesu likhápayuñ ||

See also N. L. Westergaard, Om de ældste Tidsrum i den indiske Historie. Kjöbennavn: 1860, p. 39.]

The word is not known in India: it is not an Indian term. Buddhaghosa, it is said, repaired with his books to Pegu, and thence also dates the introduction of Páli as the sacred language of the Buddhists of Ava and Siam. Shortly after his time, or between A.D. 459 and 477, the other great Páli work of the Singhalese (the Maháwanso) was composed. Of the Dípawanso, another of their authorities, the date is not specified; but as it brings down the history of Ceylon to the beginning of the fourth century* when it was left unfinished, and as Buddhaghosa was the main instrument of introducing the use of Páli into Ceylon, it must be of the same period, or the fifth century. The principal Páli works of the South are, therefore, of a period considerably subsequent to the Sanskrit Buddhistical writings of India Proper, and date only from the fifth century after Christ. Their subsequent date might also be inferred from internal evidence; for, although they are in all essential respects the very same as the Buddhist works of India—laying down the same laws and precepts and narrating the same marvellous legends—they bear the characteristics of a later and less intellectual cultivation, in their greater diffuseness, and the extravagant and puerile additions they frequently make to the legendary matter. They seem also to be very scantily supplied with the Abhidharma or metaphysical portion of the Tripitaka, as compared with the Súra and Vinaya. Such portions

* [Journal As. Soc. Bengal, VII, 922.]

of the Pítaka as have been translated are, however, essentially the same as the Sanskrit Sútras, whilst the Atthakathás, or the commentaries, take a more discursive range, and are of a less authentic character; being in fact the compositions of Buddhaghosa, *taken*, as he himself states, *not translated*, from the Singhalese Atthakathá, which are no longer extant. How much therefore is his own, cannot be now determinated.

Of the three classes of works constituting the Tripitaka, that of the Sútras is historically the most important. A Sútra is properly a brief aphorism or precept, conveying a position or dogma in a few concise, and not unfrequently obscure, terms. The Buddhist Sútras are not exactly of this nature. They are supposed to be the *ipsissima verba* of Śákya himself, the Buddha-vachana, repeated by Ánanda as he had heard them; and they all begin, whether in Sanskrit or in Páli, with the expression: "This has been heard by me.—Étan-mayá śrutam, Evam mayá sut-tam." They are in the form of a dialogue, in which the disciple asks questions and Śákya explains; illustrating his explanation by parables and legendary tales of various extent. M. Burnouf has shewn, however, that the Sútras are of two different descriptions. In one class, no doubt the oldest, the style is much more simple, and is wholly prose; and the legends are less extravagant. They are called by M. Burnouf the simple Sútras. In the other, which the Buddhists themselves term Vaipulya Sútras, "expanded or developed Sútras", the style is more diffuse, and is

mixed prose and verse; and the latter is very remarkable, as containing many ungrammatical forms; the narratives are prolix and marvellous; and new persons are introduced who, although unknown to the simple Sūtras, evidently performed a conspicuous part in the subsequent dissemination and corruption of the Buddhist religion; such are Nágárjuna or Nágasena, Manjuśrí, and Padmapáñi, to the latter of whom the invocation that is now so conspicuous in the temples of Nepal and Tibet is addressed under a modified name in ungrammatical Sanskrit, and with additions palpably borrowed from the Tantras of the Brahmans—Om! Mañipadme! Húm!—Glory to Mañipadma—Húm! Another personage is also, for the first time, introduced,—Avalokiteśwara, who is regarded by the Tibetans as their particular patron, and who is an object of especial worship to the Mongols and Chinese, amongst whom he is sometimes represented as having eleven heads and eight arms; or sometimes a thousand eyes and a thousand hands, as expressed by his Chinese name Kwan-shi-in*. Many absurd legends respecting this Bodhisattwa are current amongst the Buddhists of the north, but they, and the multiplied limbs of Avalokiteśwara, are, no doubt, unauthorized additions, even to the texts of the Vaipulya Sūtras. The introduction of such legendary and mythological personages is, however, sufficient evidence that these works are later than the

* [See Wassiljew, l. l., I, 135.]

simple Sūtras, although most of them were current in India when visited by the Chinese in the fifth and sixth centuries.

It is, therefore, to the simple Sūtras that we are to look for the earliest and least corrupt form in which, according to Buddhist notions, the doctrines of their founder are delivered. M. Burnouf has given us specimens in the Māndhātṛi and Kanakavarṇa Sūtras*, portions of a larger work, the Divya-avadāna; they record severally the names of Buddha when he was the king Māndhātṛi, a name well known in Paurāṇik fiction, and when, as king Kanakavarṇa, he gave away to a Bodhisattwa the last morsel of food which a long drought and famine had left for his sole sustenance. Of course this act of charity was followed by an immediate fall of rain and the return of plenty. To judge from these specimens, the simple Sūtras, although the earlier, are not the most interesting of the Buddhist writings, and details which are of more value to the history, if not to the doctrine only, are to be found in the Vaipulya Sūtras—constituting the authorities of the Mahāyāna, the great vehicle, which were the particular objects of Hiuan Tsang's studies and collections. Amongst these we may particularize the Lalita Vistara—the expansion of the sports [of Buddha]; being his life—and in Buddhist belief, his autobiography—having been repeated by himself. The Sanskrit original is not very rare in India, and

* [Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, p. 74 ff. 90 ff.]

the Asiatic Society of Bengal has undertaken the publication of the text and translation by Rájendra lál Mitra. The entire work has been published at Paris, translated from the Tibetan, as I have mentioned, by M. Foucaux*, who has compared it carefully with the Sanskrit, and bears testimony to the closeness of the Tibetan translation. He ascribes its composition to a period subsequent to the third convocation, or about 150 years B.C. It was translated, as I have stated, into Chinese in the first century after, which is compatible enough with the date assigned to its first composition, and there is internal evidence in favour of the same date**.

It is, undoubtedly, subsequent to the Mahábhárata, which I have elsewhere conjectured to be about two centuries prior to Christianity; for it is said, that when the choice of the family in which the Buddha should be born was under consideration in the Tushita heaven, that of the Pándavas of Hastinapura was objected to, because they had filled their genealogy with confusion, terming Yudhishthira the son of Dharma, Bhímasena the son of Váyu, Arjuna of Indra, Nakula and Sahadeva of the Aświns; all very correct citations***. In the proofs also of his skill in archery

* [See A. Schiefner in "Mélanges Asiatiques". St. Pétersbourg: 1852. I, 217 ff.]

** [Wassiljew, l. l., I, 192. St. Julien in Foucaux's *Lalitavistara*, II, p. xvi.]

*** [*Lalitavistara*, Calcutta edit., p. 24.]

which Śákya displays in his youth he pierces with his arrow an iron effigy of a boar, the very feat which Arjuna performs, only that the Pándu prince achieves it within the reasonable compass of a meadow, whilst, in the usual strain of Buddhist exaggeration, Śákya hits the mark at the distance of ten *kos*, or twenty miles off*: these circumstances clearly refer to the Hindu poem, and concur in placing the age of the Lalita Vistara about a century and a half before the Christian era. It embodies, however, no doubt, the traditions of an earlier date, traditions not long subsequent to the first dissemination of the principles of Buddhism.

The circumstances of Buddha's life, as told in the Lalita Vistara, have furnished all the Buddhist nations with their traditions. The life and acts of Buddha are always related to the same purport, and very nearly in the same words, in Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Páli, Burman, Siamese, and Singhalese. After an infinitude of births in various characters, during ten millions of millions and one hundred thousand millions of kalpas, the shortest of which consists of sixteen millions of years, and the longest of thirty-two millions, he attained the rank of Bodhisattwa, that which is inferior only to a Buddha, in the Tushita heaven, where he taught his doctrine to innumerable millions of Bodhisattwas, or future Buddhas, and gods and spirits; and was glorified by Śakra, Brahmá, Maheśwara, Nágas, Gandharbas, Yakshas, Asuras,

* [l. 1., p. 175 f.]

and other creations of the Brahmanical mythology. To rise to the elevation of a perfect Buddha one existence more on earth was necessary, and he, therefore, becomes incarnate as the son of the Śákya prince Śuddhodana, king of Kapilavastu, and Máya his wife: he is born miraculously from his mother's side, who died seven days after his birth: as soon as born he took seven steps to each of the four quarters; announcing aloud his supremacy in language, which the Lalita Vistara and the Buddhist writings of Ava and Ceylon similarly repeat, at least substantially. The Lalita Vistara, for instance, makes him say in the east, "I shall proceed, the first of all existences, springing from the root of virtue:" in the south, "I shall be worthy of the offerings of gods and men:" in the west, "This is my last birth; I shall put an end to birth, old age, disease, and death:" in the north, "I shall have no superior amongst beings*." So Mr. Hardy**, translating from various Buddhist works in Páli, says: "at his birth he was received by Mahá Brahmá in a golden net, from which he was transferred to the guardians of the four quarters, who received him on a tiger's skin, from the dewas he was received by the nobles, who wrapped him in folds of the finest and softest cloth, but at once Bodhisat

* [l. 1., p. 96 f.]

** [Manual of Buddhism, p. 145 f. See also Bigandet's "Legend of the Burmese Budha", in the Journal of the Indian Archipelago, Vol. VI (1852), p. 500; and Bennett's "Life of Gaudama", in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. III (1853), p. 11.]

descended from their hands to the ground, and looked to the four points, and to the four half points, and above and below; when he looked towards the north he proceeded seven steps in that direction and exclaimed: 'I am the most exalted in the world. I am chief in the world. I am the most excellent in the world. Hereafter there is to me no other birth.'" The legend is evidently the same although slightly varied.

Siddhártha, his name as a prince, was educated as a prince, married to different wives, and led a life of pleasure and enjoyment, until the vanity of worldly existence was impressed upon his conviction by his meeting, on three several occasions, with a sick man, a corpse, and a mendicant, on which he resolved to abandon his royalty and devote himself to solitary meditation. His father disapproves of his intention, and places him under restraint; but he makes his escape miraculously by night, with one attendant, and having reached a convenient distance from the city changes his dress with a hunter,—a demigod in disguise,—and with his sword cuts off his own hair. According to a Páli authority quoted by M. Burnouf*, this was the origin of the curly hair of the figures of Śákya, which induced early European writers to consider him as of Abyssinian origin, for the hair, shortened to the length of two fingers, turning upwards, remained in that position the rest of his life. He then engages in sacred study under different Brah-

* [Lotus de la bonne Loi, p. 660 ff. 864. Bigandet, l. l., p. 519. Bennett, l. l., p. 23.]

mans, but, dissatisfied with their teaching, retires into solitude, followed by five of his fellow-disciples, and for six years practises rigorous austerities: finding their effects upon the body unfavourable to intellectual energy, he desists and adopts a more genial course of life, on which his five disciples quit him and he is left alone. He is then assailed by the demon of wickedness, Mára, "the killer", who is identical with Káma-deva, or the God of Love; but terrors and temptations fail to disturb his serenity, and the Tempter is compelled to acknowledge his defeat, and to withdraw. Buddha, resuming his meditations, contemplates the causes of things, which is the key to the well-known formula of the Buddhists found upon so many of their images, and of which the various readings, as given in a communication by Colonel Sykes, in the forthcoming number of our Journal*, are evidently nothing more than the blunders of ignorant transcribers, or defects in cutting the letters on clay or stone. In the *Lalita Vistara*, Buddha's meditations are thus recapitulated:—

"Thus thought the Bodhisattwa: 'from what existing thing come disease and death? age and death being the consequences of birth, birth is the cause of disease and death.'" He then proceeds to analyse in the same strain the causes of birth, of conception, of desire, of sensation, of contact, of the senses, of name and form, of comprehension, of ideas; and concludes that igno-

* [Journ. R. As. Soc., Vol. XVI, p. 37 ff.]

rance, Avidyá, is the cause of ideas, and is the remote cause of existence*.

The next subject of his meditations is the means by which this chain of causes is to be counteracted, and he concludes: "Birth being no more, old age and death are annihilated; and as ignorance is the ultimate cause of existence, then by the removal of ignorance all its consequences are arrested, and existence ceases, by which means old age, death, wretchedness, sorrow, pain, anxiety, and trouble, the whole mass of suffering, becomes for ever extinct**." This is the summary of Buddhistic wisdom set forth in the popular stanza,

"Ye dharmá hetu-prabhavá,"

with which we have long been familiar***.

The Lalita Vistara is somewhat silent on the subject of Śákya's peregrinations, and represents him as chiefly engaged in discourses to his Bhikshus, or mendicant followers, or in intercourse with the Nágas and the Devas. He attains to the perfection of a Buddha at Bodhimañda †, which is apparently ancient Gayá, and resides there until he thinks it necessary to look out for some person who may succeed him as teacher of the law; he then proceeds to Benares, and on his way, having no money to pay for being ferried across the Ganges, he transports himself over it in the air.

* [l. l., p. 144.]

** [l. l., p. 145.]

*** [Burnouf, Lotus, p. 521 ff. Journal R. A. Soc., Vol. XVI. 38-44. Koeppen, Religion des Buddha, I, 223.]

3 † [Rgya tch'er rol pa, II, p. 47. Hiuen tshang, Mémoires, II, 456. Wassiljew, I, 46.]

At Benares he recovers his five original disciples, but it does not appear that they are appointed to succeed him: on the contrary, Buddha addressed these words, it is said, to Mahá Kásyapa, Ánanda, and the Bodhi-sattwa Maitreya: "Friends! the Supreme Intelligence, perfect and full, which I have acquired in a hundred thousand millions of kalpas, I deposit in your hands. Do you yourselves receive this part of the Law, teach it fully in detail to others." He then praises the Súra, the Lalita Vistara, after which, "the sons of the gods, the Máheswaras, and the rest of the gods, the Śuddha-káyasakáyikas, Maitreya, and all the other Bodhi-sattwas, Mahásattwas, Mahá Kásyapa, and the rest of the Mahá Śrávakas, Ánanda, and the worlds of the gods, of men, of Asuras, of Gandharbas, rejoiced, and praised aloud the instructions of Bhagáván *."

As the Lalita Vistara is attributed to Śákya himself, it cannot contain any account of his death. For this we must have recourse to the Mahá Parinirvána Sútras, of which we have only the Tibetan translation, in the eighth and two following volumes of the Nya division of the Do Class of the Kabgyur, and of which Csoma has given us an abridged translation; we have it also in the life of Śákya in the Mongol, as translated by Klaproth in the Asia Polyglotta, and we have what is no doubt the same work in Páli, the Parinibbána Suttam, a section of the Díggha nikáyo, of which Mr. Turnour has given us an analysis (J. A.

* [Rgya tch'er rol pa, II, p. 406 f.]

S. B., VII, 991)*. The accounts, as far as they go, are substantially the same, but the proximate cause of Śákya's death, illness brought on by eating pork, seems to be an addition of the compiler of the Singhalese narrative; no such incident is alluded to by either Csoma or Klaproth, and it seems very inconsistent with Śákya's recommendation of abstinence: as also Śákya had attained the age of eighty he might have been allowed to die of natural decay. The Páli legend adds that the pork was provided for him, and for him alone, by his host, at his particular desire, because he knew it would cause his death**. According to both narratives he directed his disciples to dispose of his remains after the fashion of that of the Chakravarttís, or universal monarchs, the ashes of whose bodies, after burning, were collected and deposited in stately pyramidal monuments. Accordingly his ashes were at first placed in a monument erected where he died, in Kuśinagara, or Kuśia in Gorakhpur, but portions were claimed by various persons; and the warriors of Kuśa, although they at first refused to give up any of the precious deposit, were at last induced by the mediation of a Brahman, who is not named in Csoma's analysis, but is termed Doño, that is, Droña, by Turnour, to assent to a division. The distribution is in some respects not very intelligible; one part is for the champions of Kuśa, one for those of Digpachan or

* [Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire*, p. 74.]

** [Koeppen, *l. l. I*, 114 f.]

Tibet, one for the royal tribe of Baluka, one for the royal tribe of Krodtya, one for a Brahman of Vishnú-dwípa, one for the Śákyas, one for the Lichhavis of Allahábád, and one for Ajátaśatru, king of Magadha: they all built chaityas over them and paid them worship. The urn in which the reliques had first been placed was given to the Brahman who had mediated, and another Brahman received the cinders: they also erected chaityas. Of the four eye-teeth, two were distributed to the deities called Trayastrínsats, and the Nágas; one was placed in "The Delicious City", and one in the country of the king of Kalinga, whence in time it found its way to Ceylon, where it is still preserved. Hence originated the practice of constructing the monuments called Sthúpas, or Topes, which have excited so much interest of late years, and of which a subsequent sovereign of Magadha, Ásoka, is said to have constructed 84,000. In many parts of Tibet, where they are more usually termed Chaityas, or Chaits, they are numerous but small, containing, it is supposed the ashes of distinguished Lamas. Chaitya, which is a Sanskrit term, is in fact equally applicable to any sacred object, a temple, or a tomb; every Sthúpa may be a Chaitya, but a Chaitya may be also something else of a religious character*.

These accounts of Śákya's birth and proceedings, laying aside the miraculous portions, have nothing very impossible, and it does not seem improbable that

* [Koeppen, l. l. I, 533 ff. Lassen, Ind. Alt., II, 266.]

an individual of a speculative turn of mind, and not a Brahman by birth, should have set up a school of his own in opposition to the Brahmanical monopoly of religious instruction, about six centuries before Christ; at the same time there are various considerations which throw suspicion upon the narrative, and render it very problematical whether any such person as Śákya Sinha, or Śákya Muni, or Śramaṇa Gautama, ever actually existed. In the first place, the Buddhists widely disagree with regard to the date of his existence. In a paper I published many years ago in the Calcutta Quarterly Magazine, I gave a list of thirteen different dates, collected by a Tibetan author, and a dozen others might be easily added, the whole varying from 2420 to 453 B.C. They may, however, be distinguished under two heads, that of the northern Buddhists, 1030 B.C. for the birth of Buddha, and that of the southern Buddhists, for his death B.C. 543. It is difficult, however, to understand why there should be such a difference as five centuries, if Śákya had lived at either the one or the other date.

The name of his tribe, the Śákya, and their existence as a distinct people and principality, find no warrant from any of the Hindu writers, poetical, traditional, or mythological; and the legends that are given to explain their origin and appellation are, beyond measure, absurd. The most probable affinity of the name is to that of the Śakas, or Scythians, or Indo-Scythians, as if they were an offshoot from the race that dislodged the Indo-Bactrian Greeks, but

this is not countenanced by any of the traditions, Brahmanical or Buddhist.

The name of Śákya's father. Śuddhodana, "he whose food is pure,"—suggests an allegorical signification, and in that of his mother, Máya, or Máyádeví, "illusion, divine delusion,"—we have a manifest allegorical fiction; his secular appellation as a prince, Siddhártha, "he by whom the end is accomplished,"—and his religious name, Buddha, "he by whom all is known," are very much in the style of the Pilgrim's Progress, and the city of his birth, Kapila Vastu, which has no place in the geography of the Hindus*, is of the same description. It is explained, "the tawny site," but it may also be rendered, "the substance of Kapila," intimating, in fact, the Sánkhyā philosophy, the doctrine of Kapila Muni, upon which the fundamental elements of Buddhism, the eternity of matter, the principles of things, and final extinction, are evidently based. It seems not impossible, after all, that Śákya Muni is an unreal being, and that all that is related of him is as much a fiction as is that of his preceding migrations, and the miracles that attended his birth, his life, and his departure.

At the same time, although we may discredit the actuality of the teacher, we cannot dispute the introduction of the doctrine, and there may have been, about the time attributed to Śákya's death by the southern Buddhists, a person, or what is more likely,

* [But compare L. Vivien de St.-Martin in "*Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales*", II, 356 ff.]

persons of various castes, comprising even Brahmans, who introduced a new system of hierarchical organisation, for that seems to have been the chief, if not the sole innovation intended by the first propagators of Buddhism. The doctrine of transmigration was common to the Buddhists and to every division of the Brahmanical Hindus: the eternity of matter and the periodical dissolution and renovation of the world were also familiar to all the schools; the Buddhists did not abolish caste, they acknowledged it fully as a social institution, but they maintained that it was merged in the religious character, and that all those who adopted a religious life were thereby emancipated from its restrictions, and were of one community: the moral precepts which they inculcated, with at least one exception—the prohibition of taking away animal life, were common to them and to the Brahmans; and the latter seem to have adopted from the Buddhists, very possibly, the merit of *Ahimsá*: the Buddhists recognised the existence of all the gods of the Brahmanical pantheon, with perhaps one or two exceptions which may have been of later date, such as *Kṛishná* for instance: the notion of final extinction or *Nirváña*, although more unqualified, was not exclusively confined to the Buddhists. In short, the philosophy of Buddhism, as is observed by Mr. Gogerly, was essentially eclectic, and the main point of disagreement was the political institution of a religious society which should comprise all classes, all castes, women as well as men, and should throw off the authority of

the Brahmans as the sole teachers of religious faith. It seems likely also that the same innovators discarded the ritual of the Vedas, and discontinued the adoration of the Hindu divinities, placing the observance of moral duties and the practice of a life of self-denial and restraint above the burthensome and expensive charges of formal worship. Their departure from the Brahmanical system started about the time ascribed to Śákya's teaching, became gradually developed as the organization of those by whom they were professed became more perfect, and by the middle of the third century before Christ, they may have enjoyed the patronage of Aśoka, the Rájá of Central India, as the Buddhist traditions maintain, and under his encouragement a convocation may have been held, at which the associated Buddhists commenced that course of propagation which spread their religion throughout India and beyond its confines to the north and to the south. I do not think that the difficulties which attend the identification of Aśoka with Piyadasí have yet been cleared up, but we may admit that the edicts on the columns and the rocks were inscribed about the time of Aśoka's reign, or in the third century before Christ. We may admit also that they are intended to recommend Buddhism, but their tone is not that of a triumphant or exclusive form of belief, and the spirit of toleration which they breathe is an unequivocal proof of a nascent faith, a system that courts compromise rather than provokes and defies hostility. At this period we may conceive the marvels of Śákya's life and the more de-

tailed expansion of the doctrines ascribed to him to have been devised, as calculated to excite the admiration and win the belief of the natives of India, ever ready to give credit to the supernatural, and to pay superstitious homage to the assumption of divinity. Besides the inscriptions attributed to Aśoka, he is said to have been a profuse constructor of Vihāras, Buddhist monasteries, and of Sthūpas or monuments over Buddhist reliquiæ. Vihāras were probably multiplied about this time or even earlier: we have not yet met with any Sthūpas to which so high an antiquity can be confidently assigned. It seems little likely that Śākya, or the first propagators of the system, would have enjoined the construction of monuments to preserve the frail relics of humanity, when their first dogma was the worthlessness of bodily existence, and it could not have been until Śākya was elevated by his followers to the rank of something more than a god that his relics, or those of his early disciples, should have been held entitled to such veneration; at any rate we have no evidence of the erection of any Sthūpa as early as the middle of the third century before Christ, whilst we have several proofs of their construction after the era of Christianity, down as late as the sixth century afterwards. These are afforded by the discovery, in the solid body of the monuments, of the coins of the consular families of Rome, and of the first Cæsars; of the coins of the emperors of Constantinople, Theodosius, Marcian, and Leo, who reigned from A.D. 407 to A.D. 474; and

of great quantities of the coins of the Sassanian princes of Persia, down to Kobad, who died A.D. 531. These coins are found in the Topes of the Panjáb and Afghánistán, and establish beyond dispute that the practice of constructing monuments of this class prevailed in the north-west of India from some time after the beginning of the Christian era until the sixth century. The most remarkable monument of this class in Central India is that of Bhilsa or Sánchi, in its neighbourhood. This was first brought to notice by Captain Fell, who published a description of it in the Calcutta Journal in 1819; this description, with additions, was reprinted by Mr. J. Prinsep*, in the third volume of the J. B. Asiatic Society, and at his suggestion sketches of the most remarkable objects and facsimiles of inscriptions abounding on the spot, were sent him by Captains Smith and Murray, and published by him, with translations and important comments, in the sixth volume of the Journal. More recently, Lieutenant Maisey has been employed by the government of Bengal to make careful drawings of these remains; and some of his sketches which have been sent home evince his great merit as an artist as well as an antiquarian. The publication of these documents has been anticipated by Major Cunningham, who had associated himself with Lieutenant Maisey in the investigation, and who has published the results of his own labours in a work entitled *The Bhilsa Topes*, in which he has

* [See also J. Prinsep's *Essays on Indian Antiquities*, ed. E. Thomas. I, 171 ff.]

given not only sketches of various interesting objects, but copies and translations of more than 200 inscriptions. They are mostly short, merely specifying the liberality of some devout Buddhist in a gift which is not specified; as, *Dhamma rakhitasa bhichchuno dānam*, "the gift of the mendicant Dharma Rakshita*." Major Cunningham conjectures the gifts to have been stones or sculptured contributions to the structure. From one of them he infers the date of the inclosure to have been the early part of the reign of *Asoka*—"Subahitasa Gotiputasa Rāja-lipikārāsa dānam—the gift of the king's scribe, Subahita, son of Goti**;" Gotiputra being the teacher of the celebrated Moggali-putra. From an inscription in one of the gateways in which the name of *Sri Sāt Karni* occurs, Major Cunningham concludes the gateways were erected about the beginning of the Christian era, in which Lieutenant Maisey concurs***. These, however, he considers long posterior to the body of the building, which he would carry as far back as 250 B.C., or even 500 B.C., on somewhat insufficient evidence; its being as old as *Asoka* depending upon the identification of Gotiputra the teacher of Moggali-putra, who presided, it is said, at the third council in A.D. 241, a statement altogether erroneous, as Moggali-putra, Maudgala, or Maudgalyāyana, was one of *Śākya's* first disciples, three centuries earlier. In the second and third of the topes of *Sānchi*, Major Cunningham found relic boxes,

* [Bhilsa Topes, p. 238, No. 19.]

** [l. 1., p. 251, No. 110.]

*** [l. 1., p. 264 ff.]

inscribed with the names of Kásyapa, Moggaliputra, and Śáriputra, from which he would seem to infer that the topes must have been erected soon after their deaths, or some time between 550 B.C. and 250 B.C.; but, as he himself remarks, the reliques of Buddha and his principal disciples were very widely scattered, being found in different places; and once the notion of their sanctity was adopted, they were no doubt multiplied, as so many pious frauds, in order to give a reputation to the building in which they were said to be enshrined; similar vases were also found at Śatdhara and Andher, furnishing examples of this multiplication of relics in the same immediate neighbourhood. Their asserted presence, in any monument, is no more a proof of its antiquity than would the hairs of Buddha, if ever dug up, prove the Shwedagon of Rangoon to have been built in his day. No legitimate conclusion can be drawn, therefore, from inscriptions of this class, as to the date of the Sánchi monuments, whilst the name of a Sát Kární prince is a palpable indication of their being erected subsequent to the Christian era. The topes of Ceylon, however, appear to be of an earlier date, if we may credit the tradition which ascribes the erection of the Ruanvelli mound at Anurádhapura to king Dutthagamani, who reigned, 161 B.C. to 137 B.C.*

A somewhat earlier period than that of the Indian Sthúpas may be assigned to another important class

* [Lassen, Ind. Alt., II, 428 f. Journ. As. Society Bengal, XVI, 221.]

of Buddhist monuments—the Cave Temples belonging to that persuasion—but they also, as far as has been yet ascertained, are subsequent to Christianity. The Rev. Mr. Stevenson has lately furnished important illustrations of this subject to the Journal of the Branch Asiatic Society of Bombay, in his translations of the inscriptions in the Cave Temples of Kanheri, Karlen, Junir, Nasik, and other places in the Sahyádri range of hills, from facsimiles taken under the authority of the government by Mr. Brett. They, like the inscriptions on the Sthúpas, are usually brief records of gifts not specified, by persons, for the most part, of no mark or likelihood, but there are a few names of historical value, as well as a few dates. In one case, the excavation at Nána Ghát, Mr. Stevenson conjectures for it an antiquity of 200 B.C., but there do not seem to be sufficient grounds for such a conjecture*. In another case he proposes**, for a column at Karlen, the date 70 B.C., as it was set up by Agni-mitra, son of Mahárāja Bhoti, whom he would identify with the last of the Sunga dynasty, Devabhúti; but this, to say the least, is problematical, and in this, as well as in the preceding, Mr. Stevenson himself queries the chronology: the dates which he proposes without hesitation begin with A.D. 189, but we tread upon tolerably safe ground when we come to various dates from 20 B.C. to A.D. 410, because the inscrip-

* [Journ. Bombay Br. R. A. Soc., V, 174 f. 428.]

** [ib. 3 f. 152 f. 426 f. (where he corrects *bhoti* into *goti*).]

tions give us several of the names of the Ándhra-bhṛitya, or, in the dialect of the inscriptions, Ádhá-bhati princes; such as Bálin, Kṛipa Karṇa, Gautami-putra, and Yajna Srí Sāt Karṇi, members of a dynasty who were the powerful princes of the "Andhra gens", noticed by Pliny, and who, we learn from the Purāṇas, confirmed by the accounts of the Chinese travellers, extended their authority to Central India, and reigned at Pátaliputra from the commencement of the Christian era to the fifth century after it, which period we may consider as the date of the principal Buddhist excavations in the west of India.

The evidence thus afforded by the Sthúpas, and the caves, of the time in which the principal monuments of Buddhism were multiplied, harmonises with that which we have derived from the more lasting literary monuments of the same faith, and leaves no doubt that the first four or five centuries after Christ, were the period during which the doctrine was most successfully propagated, and was patronized by many of the Rájás of India, particularly in the north and in the west. Ever ready as the Chinese traveller, Fa-Hian, at the end of the fourth century, is to see Buddhism everywhere dominant, he furnishes evidence that in the east, and particularly in the place of its reputed origin, the birth place of Śákya, which had become a wilderness, it had fallen into neglect. In the seventh century, Hiuan Tsang abounds with notices of deserted monasteries, ruined temples, diminished number of mendicants, and augmented pro-

portion of heretics. It has been already conjectured that this was the term of its vitality, and that the seventh century witnessed its disappearance from the continent of India. Traces of Buddhism lingered, no doubt, till a much later period, as is shewn by the inscription found at Sárnáth as late as the eleventh century*; but it was then limited to a few localities, and had shifted its scene to the regions bordering on its birth-place, being shortly afterwards so utterly obliterated in India Proper, that by the sixteenth century the highest authority in the country, the intelligent minister of an inquiring king, the minister of Akbar, Abulfazl, could not find an individual to give him an account of its doctrines.

It would be impossible, in the limited time at our disposal, to enter upon a detail of what those doctrines are; but I may briefly advert to one or two of those which may be regarded as most characteristic. Some of those which are common to Buddhists and Brahmans have been noticed, and of those which are peculiar, the difference is rather in degree than in substance.

Thus the attribution to a Buddha of power and sanctity, infinitely superior to that of the Gods, is only a development of the notion that the gods could be made subject to the will of a mortal, by his performance of superhuman austerities; only the Buddhists ascribed it to the perfection of the internal

[Lassen, Ind. Alt., III, 741 ff.]

purity acquired during a succession of births. The notion of Buddha's supremacy once established, the worship of the gods became superfluous; but as the mass of mankind are in need of sensible objects to which their devotions are to be addressed, Buddha came to be substituted for the gods, and his statues to usurp their altars. In the course of time, in some of the Buddhist countries, at least other idols, several of them very uncongenial with the spirit of Buddhism, and evidently borrowed from Hinduism, came to be associated with him, particularly in Tibet and China, in which latter country the temples commonly present three principal colossal images, which are the representatives of Buddha and two of his chief disciples, Śákya, Śáriputra, and Maudgalyáyana; or, according to some authorities, of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, or Buddha, the Law and the Community. They are sometimes also said to be the Buddhas of the past, present, and future ages. The temples, however, present many other idols, such as a goddess of mercy, a queen of heaven, a god of war, a god of wealth, a tutelary divinity of sailors, tutelary divinities of cities, and various other fanciful and not unfrequently grotesque beings, amongst whom we have Ganeśa with his elephant head. In Japan, if we may trust to Kæmpfer, we have representations of the avatárs of Vishnú; and in Nepal and western Tibet, as already remarked, we have the Dhyáni Buddhas, and Bodhisattwas, Mañipadma, Manjuśrí, and Avalokiteśwara, and a host of inferior spirits and divinities, of whom

pictures or statues fill the courts, or cover the walls of the temples. The representation and worship of these idols, although not prohibited by anything in the religion of Buddha, is obviously incompatible with its spirit, and must be regarded as exotic corruptions; no such auxiliaries seem to be admitted in those countries where the system exists in its greatest purity, as in Ava, Siam, and Ceylon, as, although the images in the temples are often exceedingly numerous, they are, with exception of subsidiary figures which are not worshipped, such as dragons and lions, all of the same character, representing Gautama or his disciples generally in a sitting posture, with the legs crossed, and the hands in the act of prayer or benediction; the indefinite multiplication of the images arising from its being considered an act of merit to set up a statue of a Buddha or of a Buddhist priest of reputed sanctity.

The organization of a regular priesthood from all classes, and their assemblage in Viháras or monasteries under a superior, is also one of the distinguishing features of Buddhism, as opposed to Brahmanism, although not wholly unknown to the institutes of the latter. The monastic system, however, does not seem to have originated with Śákya himself, for he and his immediate followers were migratory, passing from one part of central India to another, except during the rainy season, when they dispersed to their respective homes, reassembling after the rains; the organization commenced probably with the first convocation, and

was brought to perfection by the third. In the first instance, the heads of the communities were elected by the associates, on account of their superior age and learning; but other motives, no doubt, soon came to influence the choice, and in time new principles were introduced, which were not originally recognized, although not wholly foreign to the spirit of the system, particularly the notion that guides the election of a successor to a deceased Dalai Lama of Lhasa, or a Tashi Lama of Tashilumbo, the selection of a child in whose person the soul of the deceased is supposed to have become regenerate, being in fact that of a Buddha on his way to perfection. This notion is now, at least, no longer confined to Tashilumbo, or to Lhasa; but is spread very generally through Tartary, according to the French missionaries; and every monastery of note seeks, upon the demise of its Superior, for a child to succeed him, sending usually to western Tibet to discover him, and detecting him by placing before the boy a variety of articles, from which he picks out such as had belonged to the deceased, and which he is supposed to recognize as having been his property in a prior existence. This, if true, may no doubt be easily managed by a little dexterity, but Messrs. Huc and Gabet suspect that Satan is at the child's elbow, and prompts the verification of the articles. The notion however is admitted to be of comparatively modern introduction, as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth century*.

* [Koeppen, l. 1., II, 120-31.]

Another essential difference between Brahmanism and Buddhism, was the proselyting spirit of the latter. Although Brahmanism has spread into countries where it could not have been indigenous, yet a Brahman, like a poet, "nascitur non fit;" and, consistent with the spirit of the code, a man must be born a Hindu, he cannot become a Hindu by conversion. The Buddhist adopted the opposite course, and hence, no doubt, their early success. The public teaching of Buddha or of the founders of the faith must have been so novel and attractive, that we can easily believe the Buddhist narratives, that vast multitudes of all classes and of both sexes attended the public preaching of the Buddhist missionaries, an encouraging precedent we may observe, by the way, for those of pure religion. There are, however, some peculiar features in the teaching of Śákya and his disciples, which render it more surprising that it should ever have been successful than that its success should have been of temporary duration. Its object is not the good of the people in their social condition: it no doubt enjoins the observance of moral duties, and reverence to parents and teachers, and the general practice of compassion and benevolence, but to whom are these injunctions addressed? according to the authorities of the religion, whether Sanskrit or Páli, to Bhikshus and Bhikshunís, persons who have separated themselves from the world, and who, besides professing faith in Buddha, engage to lead a life of self-denial, celibacy, and mendicancy, and to estrange

themselves from all domestic and social obligations: with all its boasted benevolence it enjoins positive inhumanity where women are concerned, and in its anxiety for the purity of the mendicant, prescribes not only that he should not look at or converse with a female, but that, if she be his own mother and have fallen into a river, and be drowning, he shall not give her his hand to help her out; if there be a pole at hand he may reach that to her, but if not, she must drown. An interesting illustration of this barbarity occurs in the drama called *Mñichchhakāṭī**, which represents Buddhist institutions with singular fidelity. In this spirit is the whole of the Vinaya or Buddhist discipline conceived: it is a set of rules for individuals separated from society, in whom all natural feeling is to be suppressed, all passions and desires extinguished, consistently enough with the doctrine that life is the source of all evil, and that one means of counteracting it is by the checking the increase of living beings. Rigid compliance with the restraints imposed, has, however, been found impracticable, and considerable latitude has been allowed in practice. The rules of abstinence and celibacy must be strictly observed whilst the individual continues in the order of the priesthood, but he may withdraw from that order, either for ever or for a season, and may marry and lead a secular life; he may, after an interval, be readmitted, and his second admission is considered as

* [End of Act VIII.]

final, but even this does not seem to be very rigorously enforced.

Belief in a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, is unquestionably a modern graft upon the unqualified atheism of Sākya Muni: it is still of very limited recognition. In none of the standard authorities translated by M. Burnouf, or Mr. Gogerly, is there the slightest allusion to such a First Cause, the existence of whom is incompatible with the fundamental Buddhist dogma, of the eternity of all existence. The doctrine of an Ádi Buddha, a first Buddha, in the character of a Supreme Creator, which has found its way into Nepal, and perhaps into Western Tibet, is entirely local, as is that of the Dhyani Buddhas and the Bodhisattwas, their sons and agents in creation, as described by Mr. Hodgson. They are not recognised in the Buddhist mythology of any other people, and have no doubt been borrowed from the Hindus. There can be *no first* Buddha, for it is of the essence of the system that Buddhas are of progressive development: any one may become a Buddha by passing through a series of existences in the practice of virtue and benevolence, and there have been accordingly an infinitude of Buddhas in all ages and in all regions. One of the Páli authorities records the actions of twenty-four*; Schmidt, from a Mongol work, has given us the names of a thousand Buddhas. (Trans. Soc. St. Petersburg, 2, 68.) There are Sans-

* [Mahawansa, Introd. xxxii ff.]

krit authorities for seven in the present age of the world, whose praises I have translated (Asiatic Researches, Vol. XVII)* and who are represented in the Ajunta paintings. An eighth, Maitreya, is to come; but these are only a few, confined to certain periods: the number during all the extravagant intervals of Buddhist chronology has no limitation, and there can no more be a *first* than there can be a *last*, each passing on his turn to the end and aim of his existence,—extinction—*nirváña*.

Utter extinction, as the great end and object of life, is also a fundamental, and in some respects a peculiar, feature of Buddhism. *Nirváña* is literally a blowing-out, as if of a candle,—annihilation: it has been objected to this that Buddhism recognises a system of rewards and punishments after death, and no doubt its cosmology is copiously furnished with heavens and hells; but this it has in common with Brahmanism: it is a part of the scheme of transmigration; the wicked are punished and the good rewarded, but the punishment and reward are only in proportion to their bad or good deeds, and when they have been balanced the individual returns to earth to run up a fresh score, to incur in fact, according to Buddhism, a fresh infliction of suffering, life being the cause of evil from which there is no escape, but by finally ceasing to be. Brahmanical speculation contemplates, equally with Buddhism, exemption from being born

again as the summum bonum, but proposes to effect this by spiritual absorption either into universal spirit, or into an all-comprehending divine spirit; but the Buddhists recognize no such recipient for the liberated soul. No doubt, amongst the Buddhists, as amongst the Brahmans, differences of opinion occasionally prevailed, giving rise to various schools; four of these were known to the Brahmanical controversial writers before the sixth century; but, besides them, who are styled Sautrántika, Vaibhāshika, Mādhyamika, and Yogáchára*, there was an Aiswarya, or theistical school, with which the notions admitted into Nepal may have originated: the more ancient and genuine school, however, was that of the Swábhāvikas, whose doctrine is thus summarily indicated in a Buddhist Páli book: "Whence come existing things? from their own nature, — *swabhávát*. Were do they go to after life? into other forms, through the same inherent tendency. How do they escape from that tendency? where do they go finally? into vacuity, — *śúnyatá*," such being the sum and substance of the wisdom of Buddha**. That this was the meaning of Nirváña is shown in numerous passages both in Sanskrit and in Páli. In the Saddharma Lankávatára***, Śákya is represented as confuting all the Brahmanical notions of Nirváña, and concludes by expounding it to be the complete annihilation of the thinking principle, illus-

* [Wassiljew, l. l., I, 285 – 367. Koeppen, l. l., I, 151 ff. St. Julien in Journal Asiatique, Vol. XIV (1859), p. 327 ff.]

** [Burnouf, Introd., 441 ff.]

*** [ibid., 514 ff.]

trating his doctrine by the comparison generally employed of the exhaustion of the light of a lamp which goes out of itself. In the *Brahma-jála**, a Páli Súra, where again Śákya is made to confute sixty-two Brahmanical heresies, he winds up by saying: "Existence is a tree; the merit or demerit of the actions of men is the fruit of that tree and the seed of future trees; death is the withering away of the old tree from which the others have sprung; wisdom and virtue take away the germinating faculty, so that when the tree dies there is no reproduction. This is Nirváña."

The segregation of the Buddhist priesthood from the people, although, in the first instance, probably popular, from the priestly character being thrown open to all castes alike, must have been unpropitious to the continued popularity of the system, and its success can only be attributed to the activity of its propagators, and the indolent acquiescence of the Brahmins. When the influence acquired by the Buddhists with the princes of India gave them consideration, and diverted the stream of donations as well as of honours, the Brahmins began to be aroused from their apathy, and set to work to arrest the progress of the schism. The success that attended their efforts could have been, for a long time, but partial; but that they were ultimately successful, and that Buddhism in India gave way before Brahmanism, is a historical fact: to what cause this was owing is by no means

* [Burnouf, *Lotus*, p. 850 ff. *Journal Ceylon Br. R. A. Soc.*, I, 2, p. 18-62.]

established, but it was more probably the result of internal decay, than of external violence. There are traditions of persecution, and it is very possible that local and occasional acts of aggression were perpetrated by the Brahmanical party: the Buddhist writings intimate this when they represent the Bodhisattwas as saying to Buddha: "When you have entered into Nirváña, and the end of time has arrived, we shall expound this excellent Sútra, in doing which we will endure, we will suffer patiently, injuries, violence, menaces of beating us with sticks, and the spitting upon us, with which ignorant men will assail us. The Tíρθakas, composing Sútras of their own, will speak in the assembly to insult us. In the presence of kings, of the sons of kings, of the Brahmans, of Householders, and other religious persons, they will censure us in their discourses, and will cause the language of the Tíρθakas to be heard; but we will endure all this through respect for the great Řishis. We must endure threatening looks, and repeated instances of contumely, and suffer expulsion from our Viháras, and submit to be imprisoned and punished in a variety of ways; but recalling at the end of this period the commands of the chief of the world, we will preach courageously this Sútra in the midst of the assembly, and we will traverse towns, villages, the whole world, to give to those who will ask for it, the deposit which thou hast entrusted to us*," This is the language of

[Burnouf, Lotus, p. 165 f.]

the Sad-dharma Puñḍarīka, which, as I have mentioned, had been translated into Chinese before the end of the third century, and shows that the career of the Buddhists had not been one of uninterrupted success, even at so early a date, although the opposition had not been such as to arrest their progress: this, if it at all occurred, was the work of a later period, but we have no very positive information on the subject. According to Mádhyā Áchárya, a celebrated writer of the fourteenth century, the Buddhists of the south of India were exposed to a sanguinary persecution at the instigation of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa*, the great authority of the Mīmāṃsakas, who, as he preceded Śāṅkara Áchárya, may have lived in the sixth or seventh century, or earlier. Mádhyā asserts that, at his recommendation, a prince named Sudhanwan issued orders to put the Buddhists to death throughout the whole of India:

“Ā-setor-ā-tushādre tu Bauddhānām vridhabālakān
na hanti yaś sa hantavyo bhṛityān ityanwasād nṛipakḥ.”

“The king commanded his servants to put to death
the old men and the children of the Bauddhas,
from the bridge of Rāma to the snowy mountain;
let him who slays not be slain.”

We do not know who Sudhanwan was, but his commands were not likely to be obeyed from Cape Comorin to the Himālaya, and whatever truth there

* [Colebrooke, *Essays*, p. 190. Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, IV, 708 ff.]

may be in his making Buddhism a capital crime, his authority must have been of restricted extent, and the persecution limited to his own principality. The dissemination of Buddhism, however, in the countries beyond the Bay of Bengal does seem to have received a fresh impulse about the sixth or seventh centuries, and this may have been connected with some partial acts of persecution in India, and consequent emigration of the Buddhists; we have no record, however, of its having been universal, and its having been of any great extent may be reasonably doubted: it seems more likely that Buddhism died a natural death. With the discontinuance of the activity of its professors, who, yielding to the indolence which prosperity is apt to engender, ceased to traverse towns and villages in seeking to make proselytes, the Buddhist priest in India sunk into the sloth and ignorance which now characterise the bulk of the priests of the same religion in other countries, especially China, and seem there to be productive of the same result, working the decay and dissolution of the Buddhist religion.

Although expelled from India, and apparently in a state of decline in some of the regions in which it took refuge, Buddhism still numbers amongst its followers a large proportion of the human race. According to Berghaus, as quoted by Lassen, there are four hundred and fifty-five millions of Buddhists, whilst the population of the Christian states is reckoned at four hundred and seventy-four millions: Mohammedans and Hindoos are very much fewer. The enumeration

of the Buddhists, however, includes the whole of the population of China, without adverting to their distribution as the followers of Confucius or Taū-sse, or, as we have lately learned, as the professors of a composite Christianity.

Numerous, however, as the Buddhists still are, the system seems to be on the decline, where it is not upheld by the policy of the local governments, or where the priesthood does not constitute a very large share of the population. The people in general do not seem to take much interest in the worship of the temples, nor to entertain any particular veneration for their priests. The temples are always open, and service is regularly performed, usually three times a day, like the Sandhyá of the Brahmans: on these occasions the priests assemble, usually seated in two divisions or semi-choirs, who chaunt passages from the sacred books, Tibetan, Páli, or Sanskrit, the two latter being utterly unintelligible to the people, and understood by very few of the priests. The chaunting is relieved by the accompaniment of bells, and cymbals, and drums, and the blowing of the conch shells or brass trumpets, or, in the eastern Himálaya, of trumpets made of human thigh bones; incense is burnt before the images of the Buddhas, and fruit and flowers, and dishes of food placed before them. The people take no part in this performance, and come in small numbers, at their own convenience, and make their offering and prostration, and then depart. The priests, again, are said to enjoy little personal consideration:

not that they forfeit it by any conduct inconsistent with their profession, for, although there may be occasional exceptions, they seem in general to lead inoffensive, if useless, lives. In Ceylon, according to Sir Emerson Tennent, the people pay more respect to the garb than to the wearer, and take every opportunity of making it known that the yellow robe, and not the individual, is the object of their veneration. According to Mr. Hardy*, the whole number of priests in Ceylon, although many of the communities possess extensive landed estates, the gifts of the piety of former princes, does not exceed 2,500, dispersed in monasteries, the largest of which has seldom more than twenty resident members. In Fa Hian's time there were, according to him, from 50,000 to 60,000 priests in Ceylon, and in one of the monasteries at Anurádhapura, there were 5,000. Mr. Hardy adds: "in no part of the island that I have visited, do the priests as a body appear to be respected by the people: although occasionally an individual may recommend himself by agreeable manners:" they are sometimes treated unceremoniously; and he mentions an instance in which a priest was driven out of a village by the women armed with their brooms, and threatening him with personal castigation. In the Burma country the priests are more numerous, but there also they are said to have but little influence over the minds of the people, who sometimes say, not without some reason in excuse of impropriety of conduct, that the precepts of

* [Eastern Monachism, p. 309.]

the law are not for-them but for the priests. The system, however, is supported by the Government, and a high priest resides at the capital, by whom all the Punghís, or heads of establishments, are appointed. Although tolerant of the practice of other religions by those who profess them, secession from the national belief is rigidly prohibited, and a convert to any other form of faith incurs the penalty of death. The condition of Buddhism is said to be prosperous; from 2,000 to 3,000 lay worshippers make daily offerings at the great temple of the Shwe-dagon, near Rangoon; and new temples and Kyums are daily springing up, even in the districts under British authority. One great source of influence in Ava is the monopoly of education by the priesthood, and which, such as it is, is very general. Almost every Burman can write and read, for which he has to thank the Kyum or monastery of his village. Buddhism is also flourishing in Siam, where, as in Ava, it is connected with the political institutions of the state, and with the mass of the population: every male must enter the order of the priesthood at some period of his life, for however short a time; even the king must become a priest for two or three days, wearing the mendicant dress and soliciting alms of his courtiers. The high officers of the state sometimes take up their abode in a monastery, and conform to all the rules of the fraternity for two or three months together. The priests, or Talapoins as they are termed, from carrying a Tála or palm-leaf as a fan, are consequently numerous,

but the permanent inhabitants of the monasteries are either persons disgusted with life, or the old and infirm; the younger and more active members continually falling back into society. The share taken by the sovereign in the organisation of the system seems to be the chief source of its prosperity.

We have no very recent accounts of the condition of Buddhism in Japan, although, to judge from the drawings of Col. Siebold in his "Nippon", the ordinary objects of Buddhist worship are numerous, and comprehend many of the later saints of the system as well as personages apparently of peculiar and local sanctity. Buddhism also is broken up into various sectarial divisions. In China, as far as there has been any opportunity of ascertaining, which however is almost confined to the maritime districts, it is evidently on the wane: although a few monasteries are respectably tenanted, the residents are much less numerous than they have been, and many are altogether deserted; many of the temples also are in a state of decay. The majority of the priests are illiterate, and seem to hold their offices and their idols in little veneration; the people regard the priests with little respect, or in some instances with contempt, and attach no great sanctity to the objects of their worship,—a curious instance of this indifference in both is mentioned by the Right Rev. Dr. Smith, the present Bishop of Victoria. In a temple belonging to a monastery, where he was allowed to occupy a residence, he first inadvertently and then designedly, overthrew several idols,

which, being of clay, were broken by the fall, amidst, he says, the laughter of the bystanders. He resided several weeks in the monastery of Teen-tsung near Ningpo, where he constantly distributed Christian tracts in Chinese, without any hindrance or molestation.

The late Mr. Gützlaff, in a paper in our Journal now in course of printing¹, agrees entirely in the description given by Bishop Smith of the ignorance of the Buddhist priesthood, of the low estimation in which the priests are held, and the absence of all really religious feeling in the people.

It is in the north and north-west of China, extending thence through Mongolia and Eastern Tibet to Lhasa, that the chief seats of Buddhism are to be found, as we learn from the travels of the French missionaries, Messieurs Huc and Gabet, who traversed the whole interval. Throughout their entire route they met with, or heard of, what they term *Lamaserais*, that is, *Vi-háras*, or monasteries connected with temples, inhabited by numerous resident Lamas, as well as having attached to them a number of itinerant mendicant brethren. At a monastery, at a place called Chor-chi, there were two thousand resident Lamas. At a city, which they translate Blue-town, there were twenty establishments, large and small, inhabited by at least twenty thousand Lamas. At the monastery of Kun-lun, where they were allowed to take up their residence for several months, there were four thousand resident Lamas. At the chief monastery of Tartary, that of

¹ Vol. XVI, p. 73.

the Khalkas and in its vicinity, there were, it is said, thirty thousand Lamas, the head of whom exercised the temporal as well as spiritual authority of the whole country, and was an object of uneasiness to the court of Pekin. In the province of which Lhassa, the acknowledged high seat of Lamaism, is the capital, there were said to be three thousand monastic establishments, in three of which, Khaldan, Prebung, and Sera, there were in each fifteen thousand Lamas. The missionaries estimate the Lamas at one-third of the whole population; all the males of a family, except the eldest, being expected to enter the order, at least for a term; it being allowable in Tartary, as well as in other Buddhist countries, for a member of a monastery to return to active life. Every monastery has its Superior, who is very commonly originally a boy brought from Tibet, being supposed to be the late principal regenerated; he being, in fact, as before observed, a Buddha on his way to perfection.

The vast number of the Lamas of Tartary and Tibet naturally suggests the inquiry, how countries so poor, upon the whole, and thinly peopled, can support so large a proportion of unproductive members. Some of their subsistence is derived from grants and endowments made by the Emperors of China, whose policy it has been to encourage Lamaism, as tending to keep down the population. and repress the martial spirit of the nomadic tribes: further means are supplied by the people, who are a simple and credulous race, and who, although not animated by any devotional fervour,

are liberal contributors to the temples at public festivals, and to the itinerant mendicant brethren, giving largely from their stores of sheep, and wool, and butter, and various articles of consumption. The chief maintenance of the Lamas is, however, their own industry. In the Buddhist countries of the south, as Ceylon, Siam, and Ava, and apparently in China, a priest is strictly prohibited from exercising any mechanical art, or following any secular occupation; but in Tartary, the Lamas are permitted to support themselves by their own industry, even whilst living in the monastery: the monastery being, in fact, a small town of a priestly population, dwelling in houses, in streets collected round a principal temple or temples, and the main buildings occupied by the Pontiff with his staff and servants. The other Lamas are the sculptors, painters, decorators, and printers of the establishment; those who are qualified are the schoolmasters of the children of the neighbourhood, who have no other teachers; and those who are not engaged in the service of the monastery may employ their time for their own profit. There are amongst them, consequently, handicraftsmen, as tailors, shoemakers, hatters; some keep cattle and sell the milk and butter to the brethren, and some even keep shops; the consequence is great inequality of condition; those who are active and enterprising become opulent, whilst the inert and idle, who trust solely to the pittance which is doled out periodically to every member, from the common fund, may be almost in a state of starvation.

The general organization of the monasteries in Tary and Tibet, the costume of the Lamas, and many particulars of the manner in which religious service is celebrated in the temples, have often struck travellers as presenting close analogies to the conventual system and the religious offices of the Roman Catholic Church. In this latter respect, we have the admission of the French missionaries, whose enumeration we may safely follow, and who specify the use of the cross, the mitre, the dalmatic, the hood, the office of two choirs, the psalmody, the exorcisms, the censer of five chains, the benediction of the lamas by placing the right hand on the head of the faithful, the rosary, celibacy of the clergy, spiritual retirement, the worship of saints, fasts, processions, litanies, and holy water, as so many coincidences with the Romish ritual, the origin of which cannot be accidental. The present costume and ceremonial are said to have originated with a celebrated reformer, who was born in the latter half of the fourteenth century, named Tsong Kaba, who founded the monastery of Khaldan, near Lhasa, in 1409, and died in 1419*. The chief pontiff of Lhasa at first opposed the innovations of Tsong Kaba, and having in vain invited him to a conference, paid a visit to the reformer, and expatiated at great length upon the sacredness of the ancient practices and his own preeminence; he was interrupted in his harangue by Tsong Kaba, who had pre-

* [Koeppen, l. l., II, 108-120. Comp. also "Arbeiten der K. Russischen Gesandtschaft zu Peking". Berlin: 1858, I, p. 315-17.]

viously taken no notice of him, and who suddenly exclaimed: "Wretch, let go the flea that you are torturing between your thumb and forefinger! I hear his groans, they penetrate to my heart." Fleas, it seems, are very abundant in Tibet, and the Grand Lama, in violation of the precept that says, Thou shalt not kill, was privily in the act of committing murder, when thus rebuked by Tsong Kaba. Struck by this proof of Tsong Kaba's divine perception, the Grand Lama acknowledged his supremacy, prostrated himself before him, and adopted his reforms. Tradition speaks of a stranger Lama from the west, who was Tsong Kaba's preceptor, and who was remarkable amongst other things for a long nose; noses in Tartary are somewhat of the shortest; from which circumstance, as well as from the palpable resemblances adverted to, Messieurs Huc and Gabet infer*, not without some plausibility, that Tsong Kaba derived his innovations from the instructions of a European missionary, several of whom at this early period had penetrated into Tibet, Tartary, and China.

The peculiarities of the costume are certainly foreign to the original institutes of the Vinaya, which is much more faithfully followed in the south. The shaven head and yellow robes of the priests of Ceylon Ava, and Siam, are much more orthodox than the red robes and yellow hats or mitres of the Lamas of Tartary and Tibet.

Notwithstanding the liberality shewn by the people

[Souvenirs d'un voyage, &c., II, 104 ff.]

of Tibet, especially at particular festivals, to their monasteries and temples, they take no part in the celebration of the religious services, nor do they evince any stronger devotional interest than prevails in other Buddhist countries. In all of them, however, there are powerful means by which the priests work upon their feelings, and secure their adherence, and extort their bounty. Everywhere, except in China, learning, such as it is, is confined to the priesthood, and they are the sole instructors of youth; they are also the collectors and vendors of drugs, and the practisers of medicine. They still, as in the days of Clement, foretell events, determine lucky and unlucky times, and pretend to regulate the future destiny of the dying, threatening the niggard with hell, and promising heaven, or even, eventually, the glory of a Buddha, to the liberal. Their great hold upon the people is thus derived from their gross ignorance, their superstition, and their fears; they are fully imbued with a belief in the efficacy of enchantments, in the existence of malevolent spirits, and in the superhuman sanctity of the Lamas, as their only protection against them; the Lamas in Tartary are, therefore, constantly exorcists and magicians, sharing, no doubt, very often the credulity of the people, but frequently assisting faith in their superhuman faculties by jugglery and fraud. In the most northern provinces of Russia, Buddhism, degraded to Shamanism, is nothing more than a miserable display of juggling tricks and deceptions, and even in the Lamaserais of Tibet, ex

hibitions of the same kind are permitted, whatever may be the belief and practice of those of the community who are better instructed, and take no part in them themselves. Ignorance is at the root of the whole system, and it must fall to pieces with the extension of knowledge and civilisation. A striking conformity in this conclusion is expressed by the missionaries of different Christian communities. Messieurs Huc and Gabet observe: "After all we have seen in our long journey, and especially during our sojourn in the monarchy of Kun Lun, we are persuaded that it is by education, not by controversy, that the conversion of these people is to be most efficaciously promoted; and we learn from Erman, in his late travels in Siberia, that both the Russian and English missionaries at Irkutsk, and on the Selenga, had abandoned all attempts at direct conversion, and had confined themselves to the cultivation of the Mongol and Manchu languages, in order to qualify themselves to give education to the people. The process is inavoidably slow, especially in Central Asia, which is almost beyond the reach of European activity and zeal, but there is no occasion to despair of ultimate success. Various agencies are at work, both in the north and the south, before whose salutary influence civilisation is extending; and the ignorance and superstition, which are the main props of Buddhism, must be overturned by its advance.